nature net

The **Nature***Kenya* Newsletter **www.naturekenya.org** July 2001

REPORTING

URURU KEREITA FOREST PROJECT:

Promoting responsible consumer behaviour

KENVO members planting seedlings on World Environment Day

Kereita Forest is at the centre of an exciting new project to promote responsible consumer behaviour. The Ururu Kereito Forest Project being implemented by Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO), will demonstrote, through the planting of trees, how the consumer can compensate for the amount of paper or other noturol resources consumed.

For example, the UNEP Deportment of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) plans to plant one tree for eoch of the 1400 reams of paper the department uses annually. For each reom of poper it uses, DEWA sets oside some funds. KENVO uses the funds to find suitable indigenous tree seedlings. KENVO members and nearby farmers then plant the seedlings in Kereita Forest ond look ofter them until they are strong enough.

Many companies or institutions like DEWA use enormous omounts of forest products. KENVO will be trying to attract these organisations to join this initiative, which will contribute to conservation of closed-canopy forests in Kenya.

The project also involves local communities in conservation by encouraging growing of ogro forestry trees within farms neighbouring the forest.

The launch of the project was in conjunction with this year's World Environment Day. With DEWA's support, over 2000 seedlings of different species had been collected. The day was morked by planting some of these seedlings at one of the elevated ridges of the forest. Representotives from UNEP, the Assistont Permonent Secretory to the Ministry of Environment, the Chief Conservator of Forest, the Kiambu District Commissioner were omong those who ottended the lounching.

ARE YOU USING PAPER OR OTHER FOREST PRODUCTS AND WILLING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR CONSUMPTION? THEN SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE!

KENVO is o Noture Kenyo site support group; for more information contact David Kuria at Nature Kenya or at KENVO, Box 49, Matathia, email davekenvo@hotmail.com

TALKS & VIDEOS

All day Succulenta garden meeting including talk on CEROPEGIAS

BY SIRO MASINDE

Sunday 8 July '01, 11:00 a.m.
No. 57 Koitobus Road, Langata

Siro Masinde has spent many years cultivating and studying Ceropegia taxonomy and hos described several new species in Kenya.

Bring your own picnic.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA
RECEIVED
2001
LIBRARY

ONLY TOO MUCH IS ENOUGH: *DO WE NEED ALL OUR BIODIVERSITY?*

BY LEON BENNUN

Thursday 12 July '01, 6:00 p.m.
Louis Leakey Memorial Hall, NMK

Donation at door: 200/-

An East African WildLife Society talk

World Environment Day held at A.I.C Chebisaas Girls High School, SOUTH NANDI, ON 5 JUNE 2001

There were 754 people who participated on that day, most of them being students and pupils from ten schools in three Locations (Kobujoi, Chepkumia and Kaptumo). Activities included a nature walk and the planting of 1200 tree seedlings. The South Nandi Biodiversity Conservation Group (SONABIC) and Nature Kenya facilitated the event.

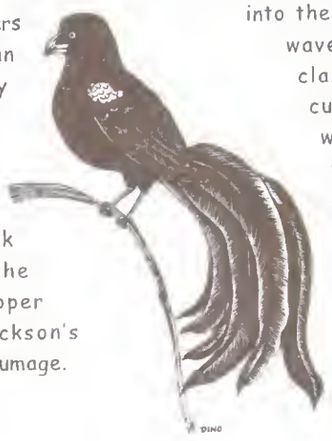
NATURALIST CORNER

DANCE CIRCLES
BY DINO MARTINS

The rains are in full swing here in the highlands. Cool, misty mornings give way to hot afternoons with scattered clouds, that sporadically coalesce into brief, intense showers. The grass is tall and lush, waving heavy, coppery seed-heads for endless miles. Everywhere life rushes to eat and breed, while food and water are still abundant.

On an evening walk, I chance upon a flattened circle of grass, perfectly tamped down, in the middle of an isolated valley. Is it the sleeping lair of a large creature? I glance hurriedly around. There are no large animals to be seen. Perhaps, some vehicle was parked here? However, there is no path, no road, no sign even of human involvement. The only other intrusion is the dark swathe that I myself have left behind me in the wet, clinging grass. I examine the flattened opening closer - it is almost perfectly circular. At opposite ends there are two cup-like holes in the encircling tall grasses. In the middle of the circle, a single tuft of grass has been left standing, like an obelisk in a battlefield. I am puzzled, what could this be? Images from the mysterious crop circles that appear on English farms flash through my mind, but it is too small for a UFO. I can't think of anything else that would produce such an imprint.

Slowly circling the circle, seeking a sign of its creator, yields a surprise. A flash of fanned feathers bursts out from the woven tangle. A smallish black bird whirrs off whistling in alarm. His flight is slow, even hampered, as a result of the profuse, ornate tail feathers that he sports. He settles on an arching strand about twenty feet away, and watches me closely. His magnificent tail stands out behind him in a beautiful black fan. His tawny shoulders and jet-black feathers blaze against the contrasting flecked copper grasses. It is a male Jackson's widowbird in full courtship plumage.



The mystery of the flattened grass-circle is solved - the widowbird is, incredibly, its creator. This circle is his life's work, his *piece de resistance*; it is, for all the world, his very own stage.

The next day, I am treated to a performance. From a specially reserved spot atop a termite mound (standing room only), an agama lizard and I watch the drama. A small, streaked, rather dull bird appears. The Jackson's widowbird leaps off his perch and hurls himself onto the stage. The small streaked bird is a female - ah, this is why he's so excited. She settles into one of the recesses, obviously the widowbirds' equivalent of a loveseat. She must be giving the right signals because now the dance *really* begins. The male widowbird flings his head back, arches his tail forward, leaves other tail feathers splayed downward. Then, in this complex, yoga-like position, he leaps up and down, singing his heart out. This goes on for the better part of an hour in periodic acts. Finally, he disappears after her into the recess. The grass waves in the wind, closing like a final curtain and the whistling thorns whisper a final salute. 'The End' - for this season, I guess.

Lake Nakuru	6,613,972
Lake Bogoria	6,184,869
Lake Elementeita	1,715,683
HIGHEST COUNTS	
Lesser Flamingo	14,006,380
White Pelican	205,748
Greater Flamingo	177,051
UNIDENTIFIED BIRDS	
Sandpipers	6,286
Ducks	6,273
Terns	5,943
Gulls	2,122
RAREST SPECIES	
Dwarf Bittern	1
Lesser Jacana	1
Pacific Golden Plover	1
Tufted Duck	1

CRUNCHING NUMBERS! 15,360,339 WATERBIRDS COUNTED 1990 TO 2001

NEXT COUNTS SCHEDULED FOR 28 & 29 JULY '01
Please contact Alfred Owino, Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya for details

Note: These are cumulative figures over 10 years!

PUBLICATIONS

NOW OUT!

JOURNAL OF EAST AFRICAN NATURAL HISTORY
Vol 88 Parts 1& 2 1999

Available @ 1000/- (Already mailed out to subscribers)

ARTICLES

Cantharophilaus insects in East Africa.

C. Hemp, A. Hemp & K. Dettner

Dragonfly (Odonata) records of Kakamega Forest, Western Kenya, with notes on the ecology of rain forest species. *V. Clausnitzer*

The enigma of the giant forest hog, Hylochoerus meinertzhageni (Mammalia: Suidae), in Tanzania reviewed. *D. Kock & K.M. Howell*

Encephalartos tegulaneus ssp. pawysii (Zamiaceae): a new cycad in Central Kenya. *B.W. Miringu & H. Beentje*

Using biodiversity data to review coverage of Uganga's protected areas. *D. Pomeroy, H. Tushobe & M. Green*

Biodiversity assessment for conservation planning in Uganda's forests. *P.C. Howard, P. Viskonic & F.W. Kigenyi*

Growth rates of important East African montane forest trees, with particular reference to those of Mount Kenya. *R. W. Bussman*

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Sunday Birdwatch (Pot-Luck Outing)

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. 15 July. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the last Monday of every month i.e. 30 July from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ. *Those who are not members of FONA pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokake Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each manth i.e. 7 July, at 6:30 o.m. from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends af Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month i.e. 21 July, at 4:30 p.m. from Ratna Square, Nyali

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

JULY DIARY

Sat 7	ASF Birdwalks
Sun 8	Succulenta meeting
Thu 12	EAWLS talk
Sun 15	Pot Luck Outing
Sat 21	FFJ Birdwalk
Mon 30	Tree Walk
Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning	

Editor, **Catherine Ngarachu**

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE

Conon AE-1 Futly outomotic SLR Camero
With 70 - 300mm VIVITAR zoom lens ond Conon 50mm wide-angle lens includes corrying cose.
Ksh 40,250/-

KOWA TSN - 2 Birdwotching/ game viewing telescope, 30 X 80mm with 30 X wide ongle lens with corrying case ond Velbon Trlpod mint condition
Ksh 52000/-

Contact Simon Ball on 576616 or 072 5107555

Trovelling to the Usambaras:
Avid ornithologist without transport seeks other birders to visit the Usambara Mountains of Tonzania for o week or 10 days between 8 ond 20 October; and/or shorter trip to search for Masked and Williams' Lark and/or Aberdare Cisticola in Kenyo

Contact Hector Gomez de Silva at hgomez@miranda.ecologia.unam.mx or c/o F. Ng'weno, Box 42271, 00100 Nairobi

Bird Hotline 749957

Pleose note the records below ore unconfirmed

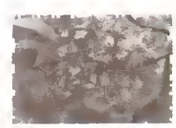
Levaillant's Cuckoo/ *May* Astrid von Kalckstein Greot Spotted Cuckoo *Kibonde, Gilgil/ June*
Astrid and Christa von Kalckstein

African Crowned Eagle
Nairobi National Park/ May
Raphel and Froncisco Cortez Armenta

Please send detoils to *Kenya Birds*, c/o Nature Kenyo or kbirds@ofricoonline.co.ke

Sorry about...Plant Outing to KEREITA FOREST

We apologise to all those who turned out for the outing to Kereita Forest, but were not able ta go because of lack of transport.



We will be organising another outing to Kerita so please stay in touch.

NOTICE

New membership rates effective from July '01

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	*Ksh Per Year*
Full	800
Sponsor	**3000**
Family	1000
Pensioner	300
Student	300
Institutional (Libraries, schools, clubs)	1000
Corporate (check with the office)	
Conservation Group Member	100

VIDEOS FOR LEASE

The Nature Kenya front office has a small collection of videos that will be avoilable, from July, for members to lease.

A refundable initial fee of 300/- per person or group will be required to be eligible to lease.

Topes are available @ 50/- eoch, and only two tapes can be leased at any time per person or group.

Lease available to members only!

'SUGGESTION BOX'

We ore always interested in whot members hove to soy obout our activities and progrommes. Now it will be easier far you to direct your ideos and recommendations by writing to 'Suggestion Box' at our post office or emoil oddress.

Let us heor from you!

NEW TO LIBRARY

The IUCN Forest Conservatian Programme book:

Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa

Edited by Neil D. Burgess and G. Philip Clarke

BirdLife

World bird festival

WORLD BIRDWATCH

6-7 October 2001

The aim this year is for teams to identify as many bird species as possible per atlas square within 48 hours, to raise money for conservation...and to have fun. (For information about the atlas squares, see June Nature Net.)

To broaden the scope of birders participating, you can now take part with family members, with friends ar with colleagues from work (remember they hove first to be Nature Kenya members). There are five categories to choose from:

- *Fomily*: A team of 2 to 5 immediate family members.
- *Corporote*: A team sponsored by a company with or without immediate family members. Maximum 9 persons with a minimum of 20000/- sponsorship roised.
- *Experienced*: A team of 3 to 5 members, individuals with birdwatching experience.
- *Handicapped*: A team of 4 or 5 members, individuals with little birdwatching experience, but with an experienced member.
- *Community*: A team organised by an IBA site support group of 4 or 5 individuals.

To organise for your World Birdwatch '01 talk to friends, family or colleagues about participating.

Once you have a team together, decide where you would like to go birdwatching, what it might cost you and send for the World Birdwatch information pack (Entry form, Bird Atlas map, Pledge form, Sponsor form, Checklist).

The organising committee can assist in placing individuals with teams and linking an experienced birder with a team. Please indicate in the entry form, if this sort of assistance is required.

The World Birdwatch committee is seeking sponsorship for accommodation and transport, which will be allocated as we recieve entry forms.

It is also important to coordinate with the office - once you decide where you would like to go birdwatching please contact us first to check if any sponsorship (accommodation and transport) has been given for that area.

EXCURSIONS

Youth Camping trip to Navaisha

Saturday 30 June – Sunday 1 July '01

The Youth camping trip to Naivasha is still on. Please book a place, as soon as you can.

It is a chance to learn about an interesting ecosystem and the challenging conservation issues facing Naivasha and its environs. Come along with a friend! *Book at the Noture Kenyo front office.*

The cost for the trip is Kshs 1,100 per person for accommodation, transport (by matatu) and park entrance fees. The fee is slightly less for those with their own camping gear (sleeping bags, tents etc.)

Meet at the National Museums car park on Saturday at 7:00 a.m.

CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Family Nature Day at the Arboretum 25 August '01

Friends of Nairobi Arboretum (FONA) need the assistance of volunteers to plan and/or conduct the activities of this day (a morning run, children educational activities, family entertainment, bird walk, tree walk).

If you can help, please get in touch with Lilian Igweta at the Nature Kenya office before 25 July '01.

Any assistance will be highly appreciated.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR CONSERVATION

22 October '01

Lounch of Africon Importont Bird Areos Book in Johannesburg, South Africa

24 -28 October '01

Conference of African Partners of Important Birds Areas programme Johannesburg, South Africa

12 - 16 November '01

7th Meeting of the Subsidiory Body on Scientific, Technicol ond Technological Advice (SBSTTA 7) of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* in Montreal, Canada

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